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AN OLD ROMANTIC TRIANGLE

During the last threescore years and ten the old story of Francesca da Rimini and her lamentable fate has been told in three plays that have been acted with more or less success. One was by an American, George Henry Boker, of Philadelphia; one by an Englishman, Stephen Phillips; and the third by an Italian, Gabriele d'Annunzio, poet, novelist, and spectacular patriot. Boker's drama was first acted in 1855, and was revived in 1882 by Lawrence Barrett and in 1901 by Otis Skinner. It has proved the most popular (certainly in literary quality it is the most notable) of American plays written before the Civil War. Stephen Phillips's *Paolo and Francesca* was first produced in 1899 and has not, I think, been revived. D'Annunzio's *Francesca da Rimini* was acted for the first time in 1901 at Rome, with Eleonora Duse as Francesca and under circumstances not altogether unlike those tumultuous scenes which marked the famous battle about *Hernani*.

The basic story of the three plays all the world knows—how Francesca of Ravenna, wedded to Giovanni, or Gianciotto ("the lame"), of Rimini, loved not wisely but too well Paolo, her deformed lord's handsome brother; and how the lovers met their doom at Giovanni's hands. Boccaccio told the tale, but Dante gave it to eternity. It is the purpose of this paper to compare the three dramatic treatments of this thirteenth-century tale of woe—to show how an American, an English, and an Italian playwright each shaped his material into action and character; or, as Browning might have put it, how each mixed the gold of his fancy with the crude ore of fact.

Boker's play has the regulation five acts and blank verse, relieved by lyrics quite in the Elizabethan fashion. There is a court jester who enlivens the monotony of life in the palace of Rimini. There are also troubadours who play and sing for the handsome, poetic Paolo and his nobles, breaking the tedium of such rare inactive hours as mark the pauses of battle between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. By the end of the first act, Lanciotto the Lame, fiery son of Malatesta, and a veritable

thunderbolt of war, yields to his father's wish that he marry, for political reasons, the beautiful Francesca of Ravenna, daughter of Guido the Ghibelline.

Accordingly, a letter is dispatched to Guido announcing that Malatesta, fearing Guido's treachery should Count Lanciotto go in person to claim his bride, will send his younger son, the Count Paolo, to fetch Francesca back to Rimini. Francesca, mistaking Paolo for Lanciotto, and naturally charmed by the beauty and courtly speech of her future husband, is undeceived by her maid Ritta, but, obedient to her father, agrees to wed the absent Lanciotto. She examines Paolo:—

"*Francesca* : Does he resemble you?

"*Paolo* : Somewhat—in feature.

"*Francesca* : Is he so fair?

"*Paolo* : No, darker. He was tanned hotly
In long campaigns and battles fought,
While I lounged idly with the troubadours,
Under the shadow of his watchful sword."

Questioned further as to details, Paolo is restrained in his report of his brother's physical graces, but is eloquent in praise of his great mind and glorious deeds. It is evident, then, that Francesca must, like Desdemona, be content with seeing Lanciotto's visage in his mind.

The third act celebrates the arrival of Francesca at Rimini and her meeting with Lanciotto. Before this fateful meeting, however, the court fool Pepe, is grimly merry at the bridegroom's expense. "Teach me philosophy, good fool," says Lanciotto; and the fool replies:—

"No need.

You 'll get a teacher when you take a wife.
If she do not instruct you in more acts
Than Aristotle ever thought upon,
The good old race of woman has declined
Into a sort of male stupidity."

Lanciotto's wooing, though more ardent, is not unlike that of Prince Berthold in *Colombe's Birthday*, who has his eye mainly on Charlemagne's seat and only incidentally on marriage: the lame lover of Francesca tells the cool princess that he will 'line her path with suppliant kings', and 'spread an empire touching

the extremes of the earth'. But the lady, although acquiescent, does not notably respond to this glorious promise. Tamerlane the Great moves her less than Paolo the beautiful.

The marriage follows, but not before Lanciotto has noticed Francesca's melancholy. The sure intuition of the lady's maid, Ritta, has divined the secret:—

“She loves Paolo! Why will those I love
Forever get themselves ensnared, and heaven
Forever call on me to succor them?
Here was the mystery, then—the sighs and tears,
The troubled slumbers and the waking dreams!”

And as Francesca goes to the sacrifice, poor Ritta exclaims: “O! What a world is this!” The marriage over, Lanciotto is summoned to the wars at once, and, despite Paolo's pleadings, is gone.

The fifth act moves with Elizabethan swiftness. The lovers in an arbor in the castle gardens are reading together in the book of Lancelot and Guinevere. The court fool Pepe, hidden behind the shrubbery, sees the culminating kiss. Mightily amused and mimicking the lovers—

“Mistress Francesca, so demure and calm,
Paolo, grand, poetical, sublime,”—

he rushes forth. To Lanciotto's camp among the hills the jester goes, bursting with news, and relates the scene to the sceptical warrior:—

“Anon the pair sat down upon a bank,
To read a poem;—the tenderest romance,
All about Lancelot and Queen Guinevere.
The Count read well—I 'll say that much for him—
Only he stuck too closely to the text,
Got too much wrapped up in the poesy,
And played Sir Lancelot's actions, out and out,
On Queen Francesca. Nor in royal parts
Was she so backward. When he struck the line—
'She smiled; he kissed her full upon the mouth';
Your lady smiled, and by the saints above,
Count Paolo carried out the sentiment! . . .
After the kiss, up springs our amorous count,
Flings Queen Guinevere and Sir Lancelot
Straight to the devil; growls and snaps his teeth,
Laughs, weeps, howls, dances; talks about his love,

His madness, suffering, and the Lord knows what,
 Bullying the lady like a thief. But she,
 All this hot time, looked cool and mischievous ;
 And when he calmed a little, up she steps
 And takes him by the hand. You should have seen
 How tame the furious fellow was at once !
 How he came down, snivelled, and cowed to her,
 And fell to kissing her again. It was
 A perfect female triumph ! Such a scene
 A man might pass through life and never see.
 More sentiment then followed,—buckets full
 Of washy words, not worth my memory.
 But all the while she wound his countship up,
 Closer and closer ; till at last—tu!—wit!—
 She scoops him up, and off she carries him,
 Fish for her table."

I have quoted the fool at length, for, in the three plays I am considering, this is the most racy speech. Needless to say, it is a good enough piece of satire on sentimentalism to please a true Meredithian and move to merriment the mocker at heroic tragedy. The faithful jester becomes the victim of his master's wrath, for in an access of frenzy Lanciotto stabs him ; then, fired with eagerness to know the truth and mad with jealous rage, he hurries to Rimini. In the romantic garden of the castle he finds the lovers, Paolo remorseful and resolved to break away, and as they take their farewell kiss the wronged husband advances between them, strikes Paolo, who refuses to return the blow, then stabs Francesca and, as the household rushes in, his brother. Paolo dies on Francesca's bosom. Lanciotto, calling old Malatesta to witness that the honor of the house is safe, himself falls on Paolo's body. So proceeds and ends the American play.

Twenty years ago—in 1899, to be exact—the young English poet Stephen Phillips, who had won his laurels in several dramatic lyrics, finished his play *Paolo and Francesca*. It was written at the instance of George Alexander, the well-known actor-manager, for presentation at the St. James's Theatre. Perhaps the critics and a respectable number of enlightened Londoners, a little wearied with early Shavian whimsies and Jonesian lectures, wanted an escape into "old, forgotten, far-off things". And so they welcomed a return of the mediæval lovers, a theme peculiarly congenial to the temperament of Stephen

Phillips. It proved the most successful of his plays, but, as was to be expected, it was too delicately lyric for a long stage life and soon joined itself to the noble fellowship of English literary dramas.

All the four acts of Phillips's play, except parts of three scenes, are in blank verse—a verse exquisitely modulated, but almost cloying in its sweetness. The action opens with Giovanni's announcement to his assembled guests and retainers of the dispatch of his brother Paolo to Ravenna to bring Francesca on the road to Rimini, immediately followed by the entrance of Paolo leading in Giovanni's bride amid flowers and sunlight. She is a childlike maiden, "all dewy from her convent fetched," who has shed no tears except over the pages of a book, and who instinctively clings to Paolo in her strange, cold, new world. Giovanni, warned by his cousin Lucrezia, that "youth goes towards youth" and that peril may impend, is heedless, absorbed in weighty political matters and seeing revolt, not within his house, but without. But the presageful visage of blind Angela, who dimly sees two reading in "a place of leaves" and later dead within each other's arms, moves him strangely.

A week later Giovanni is called by war's alarms. Paolo flees the palace, fearing to trust himself in Francesca's presence. Blind Angela's sybilline words have fatefully changed the atmosphere. Lucrezia, childless widow, highly sensitized and sympathetic, and Nita, Francesca's maid, experienced in heart affairs, scent coming trouble; and the guileless girl of Ravenna, innocent of the world,—a suddenly emancipated Lady of Shalott—moves in a maze of perilous cross-currents. Meanwhile Paolo, lingering in a wayside inn, filled with soldiers and waiting-girls, and torn with an agony of indecision between duty and love, hits upon poison as the only way out.

A scene in a wizard's shop—an Elizabethan apothecary shop, just as the inn was good old Tudor—introduces lovelorn maidens buying charms to win indifferent swains, as preliminary to the entrance of Giovanni, disguised, in search of a magic drug wherewith to gain Francesca's love. Enter Paolo in quest of his deadly potion. Incautiously he reveals to the apothecary his purpose and the cause. Giovanni, concealed, has heard it

all and is torn with conflicting passions. Upon his return to the castle, he is again summoned to battle with the Ghibellines. But Paolo, unable to forego one last glimpse of paradise, steals softly to the castle gardens as dawn is beginning to break, and there finds Francesca reading an "ancient tale". And so they fall to reading alternately and, after about a page and a half, to kissing inevitably.

Upon his return Giovanni learns from Lucrezia that Paolo is in the palace, and decides to give it out that he must again be absent several days, secretly intending to return and surprise the lovers. Francesca, vaguely sensing trouble, implores him to remain, and, failing to move him, begs Lucrezia to stay with her in the night, as she is like a motherless child—a touch, by the way, found also in d'Annunzio's play, but without this note of homelessness: the Italian's Francesca wants her sister; the Englishman's cries out for her mother:—

"I have no mother: let me be your child
To-night: I am so utterly alone!
Be gentle with me; or if not, at least
Let me go home; this world is difficult.
O, think of me as of a little child
That looks into your face, and asks your hand."

But while Lucrezia is gone to intercept Giovanni and while Francesca's maid Nita slips out to chat with Bernardo, Paolo comes. Then follows the most impassioned dialogue in the play, entrancing verse that leaps along on the brink of the precipice with the doomed lovers. They pass through the curtains in the rear. Giovanni slays them off the stage in the great sleeping-chamber. Their bodies are, by Giovanni's orders, borne to the front on a litter as the blind sybil Angela chants her chorus-like lament:—

"Two lately dead
Rushed past me in the air."

Bending over them, Giovanni kisses them on the foreheads and in a shaken voice concludes:—

"She takes away my strength.
I did not know the dead could have such hair.
Hide them. They look like children fast asleep."

The final scene is not unlike that of a Greek tragedy, "all passion spent".

D'Annunzio's play, *Francesca da Rimini*, followed hard upon Phillips's. In the translation by Arthur Symonds the loose Italian blank verse has been faithfully rendered into the corresponding English metre. The five acts are full of agitation, battle and blood,—a lively drama with a background of thirteenth-century Italy. The plot begins in Ravenna, with gayety and laughter between court jester and maidens; the turmoil of idle soldiers; the wounding of a comrade, who leaves a bloodstain on the marble floor; the relation of Francesca's ill-omened dream; the uncanny presence of the slave-girl; the tearful embrace of Francesca and her sister; the coming of Paolo; and the presentation by Francesca to Paolo of a blood-red rose, from the old Byzantine sarcophagus in the court, as the two silently face each other across the marble railing.

The rest of the action takes place at Rimini. The second act reveals the archers on the parapet of a castle ready for battle, and Francesca among them fearlessly playing with Greek fire in a sort of desperate daring of fate. Paolo shows himself an accomplished archer by piercing with an arrow the throat of a mocking enemy of his brother Gianciotto across the way. Paolo, indeed, fights as in a frenzy — fights to save himself from the peril of Francesca's presence. But the two lead a charmed life in all this inferno of battle. For his bravery Paolo is made head of the Florentine state.

In the third act Francesca, lonely, distraught, afflicted by dreams, soothed by her maid, is diverted by the talk of a pedlar, just then arrived from Florence, who tells her that Paolo will shortly return, much to the regret of the Florentines. She rewards him by buying all his stuffs and lavishing them upon her maidens in a mood of suppressed excitement, while the fool and the jester banter each other, and the dancers and musicians enliven the scene and spring violets perfume the court. All this is as a prelude to Paolo's return, the dialogue of the lovers, the reading in the book of *Lancelot of the Lake*, and the inevitable kiss.

The fourth act is mainly about Malatestino, Giovanni's older brother, who does not figure in the other two plays. He had

been nursed to health by Francesca after being dangerously wounded and, like other sick men, had fallen in love with his nurse. But Francesca had repulsed him. She had, moreover, chided him for cutting off the head of a moaning prisoner under her apartments, and had commented on it to her husband and Paolo. Thus Malatestino, her nemesis, has a motive for revenge. Like Modred, he lurks about and spies upon the lovers, and plots with Giovanni for their destruction. Returning unexpectedly, Giovanni finds the door of Francesca's room fastened, bursts it open, discovers Paolo stopped in his attempted flight by the bolt of a trapdoor which has caught in his cloak, tries to stab him, pierces the breast of Francesca, who has rushed between, and then the heart of Paolo. Giovanni does not moralize, but "stoops in silence, bends his knee with a painful effort, and, across the other knee, breaks his bloodstained sword".

I have rapidly sketched the plots of these three plays as a basis for some comparative conclusions. D'Annunzio's play is much the longest of the three, requiring on the first presentation five hours. Later it was cut and acted with greater success in various European cities. I have spoken of the metre as a loose blank verse, not free verse, although the lines are much varied in length. In English literature one finds, in general, the same sort of blank verse in Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna*, and in some of Henley's poems. D'Annunzio's verse is sensuous and passionate without being simple. It is very self-conscious, the finished product of an artist, a historian, and an orator. Rich old Italian color is everywhere: the blood-red rosebush in the old sarcophagus, the rose in Francesca's hand (almost Hawthornesque in its symbolism), bloodstains, lurid flames, gorgeous shields, crimson sunsets, bleeding faces, red wine, flaring torches, flaming skies, burning cities, patches of scarlet, bunches of violets, gory heads, pots of basil, purple grapes, and the last object in the play is Gianciotto's bloodstained sword. Color is everywhere, but crimson predominates, as if the dramatist would confirm Dante's great line—

"Noi che tignemmo il mondo di sanguigno."

D'Annunzio's *Francesca da Rimini* is a tragedy of blood, but not in the Senecan or Elizabethan sense. It seems too real for that. A student of thirteenth-century Italy, d'Annunzio is careful of detail. He is so careful and so accurate that history retards drama in the first act; we must let two or three learned partisans of Guido have their tedious say about the interminable Ghibelline affairs. Of course, that is expected in a chronicle-play, but hardly in a lyrical drama of love. The dramatist, however, never gets his eyes off the background: Francesca and Paolo and Gianciotto are rooted in that dark soil. The American and English dramatists forget the setting in their intense interest in the love of a man for a maid under exciting circumstances; not so with the Italian. He sticks closer to the few historic facts of the old triangular romance than does either of the others. He alone, for instance, refers to Paolo's wife, Orabile. He stretches the time of the action over a longer period, allowing Paolo a two months' stay in Florence, while the others reduce the interval between the marriage and the murder to a few days. All three very properly ignore the ten years of Giovanni's wedded life, and the children of Paolo and Orabile, and of Giovanni and Francesca. Following Dante, they concentrate their attention on love and death and youth.

D'Annunzio alone of the three follows Boccaccio in the details of the murder,—the locked door, the breaking in, and the attempted escape of Paolo interrupted by the catching of his mantle on the bolt of the trap-door; and only the Italian ends the play without a remorseful remark by Giovanni. Boccaccio tells us that "leaving them both dead, he hastily went his way to his wonted affairs". D'Annunzio is the only one of the three dramatists to utilize the quite Italian incident of Francesca gazing through the casement at the newly-arrived Paolo, pointed out to her by her maid as her future husband. Phillips omits the Ravenna scene, while both d'Annunzio and Boker give an entire act to it. In general, it may be said that the Italian is mainly concerned with harmony of setting and truth to mediæval life. It is significant of his attitude toward his material that in the famous reading scene, he has the lovers use the actual book of which Dante speaks—that is, he translates literally

into Italian the passage from the old French romance, *Lancelot of the Lake*: a proceeding that undoubtedly adds to the realism of the action. The effect is vital; while in Boker and Phillips, both of whom make up the Lancelot-Guinevere dialogue, the "ancient tale" is obviously manufactured for the occasion in verse too little distinguished from that which precedes and follows. The reader of d'Annunzio's play is quite convinced that the author is an archæologist as well as a poet and a dramatist.

His characters are intensely alive. Who, indeed, could escape liveliness when d'Annunzio is in creative labor? Is he not himself the most melodramatic figure of our own times, a Rienzi *redivivus*, the spectacular if unsuccessful defender of Fiume against the Philistines? And so he knew how to energize the Lord of Rimini against the Ghibellines. His lame Malatesta is no moralizing philosopher like Boker's, no superstitious seeker after love-philtres like Phillips's, but a remorseless warrior, practical, swift in action, cruel yet chivalrous,—madman, poet, and lover all compact. His Paolo is the perfect archer, accomplished horseman, dashing captain of a city state, troubadour, ardent wooer; were he living in modern Italy, he would be no doubt a thrilling aviator. I seem to be describing d'Annunzio himself—only another way of saying that d'Annunzio's heroes, like Byron's, made in their creator's image, hear and reproduce their master's tones. His Francesca is no wide-eyed, childlike maiden, such as Phillips's; she can scatter Greek fire about the battlements, stand by her lover while he handles the crossbow, buckle on his armor, nurse a wounded warrior, and gaze unflinchingly on blood. She is no Amazon, however, but very much of a woman. Troubled by ominous dreams, she clings to her sister and her maidens for sympathy; she weeps for fear of coming evil; she shudders at prisoners' cries; she is graceful in speech and manner, sensitive to beauty and devoted to music:—

"I and Samaritana,
My sister, at Ravenna, in our home,
Lived always, always in the midst of singing.
Our mother had indeed a throat of gold.
From our first infancy
Music flowed over us and bent our souls
As the water bends the grass upon the bank.
And our mother said to me:
Sweet singing can put out all harmful things."¹

¹ Symons's translation.

The two leading impressions one carries away from d'Annunzio's play are a sense of reality and a sense of beauty. Here are men and women of Dante's time, an age of blood, whose joy of living is inseparably joined with their love of the beautiful. They may be cruel, but they are none the less infallibly artistic. They are artistic without subtlety. They lack, of course, the complexity of moderns; the burden and the mystery of life—its tragic undertone—they apparently neither know nor care about. Perhaps Francesca has a faint intuitive sense of it, but she is less modern than Tennyson's Guinevere. These children of thirteenth-century Italy do not moralize, do not analyze. D'Annunzio has endowed them with intense lyric speech, not with a system of philosophy; such philosophy as they have is essentially practical and teaches them to make the most of life while it lasts.

Of the three plays the *Paolo and Francesca* of Stephen Phillips has the greatest simplicity of plot. Compared with d'Annunzio's drama it seems thin and lacking in range and vigor. Instead of life itself we find a dim, dreamlike region, and shadowy figures speaking distantly. One has only to read a page from John Webster, for instance, and then a page from this drama to appreciate the difference between late Elizabethan romance and this late Victorian variety. The one is a voice, the other an echo. In pure vitality Phillips's play also falls short of Boker's. The noise of battle is excluded, action is reduced to a minimum, and "supernatural solicitings" engage the attention—blind Angela's clairvoyance, sleeping-potions, and love-charms. Suspicion early becomes an obsession with Giovanni. Giovanni's occupation is gone; he perfunctorily chases the troublesome Ghibelline, but diligently plots against his elusive brother. Thanks to Lucrezia's suspicions and Angela's visionary revelations, he has become a restless spirit. D'Annunzio's Gianciotto is throughout the play the warrior, Boker's the warlike philosopher, and Phillips's the jealous husband. Paolo in the Englishman's play is all melancholy lover, running away, buying poison, and returning as the moth to the flame. He is no more interested in war than is his brother. Francesca, as I have already remarked,

is a sweet convent girl. Phillips gets rid of the fighting and the feuds and the blood, concentrating his energy on the intrigue, its beginning, progress, and tragic end. His play has more unity than the others—the unity and symmetry of a Greek drama: there are no violent deeds on the stage, there is a sort of chorus in Angela, and Fate is writ large in the triple tragedy.

Let us call it, then, an exquisite dramatic poem in lyric tones celebrating the death of youth,—Poe's conception of an ideal theme. *Paolo and Francesca* is among the noblest poetic utterances in English drama since Tennyson; it is far less of a closet drama than any one of Tennyson's because it has several good stage situations, two of which are mildly comic, and because it moves unimpeded by lengthy speeches. The simplicity of the plot is enhanced by the omission of Malatestino, Malatesta, and Guido, members of the family whose presence in the other plays seems more or less superfluous. One finds a distinctive note in the lament of the childless Lucrezia, a figure even more tragic than Francesca; and, in this play, as in Boker's, much is made of the childhood affection of the brothers, a circumstance which is not in keeping with the fiercer amenities of the Italian play.

George Henry Boker's *Francesca da Rimini* is almost fifty years older than the two plays already considered. It pleased the taste of a generation that loved romantic tragedy, and it proved vital enough to receive applause from later audiences. One is, of course, reconciled to the long speeches, the soliloquies, the asides, the sprinkling of classical names, and the frequent lyric relief, quite in the old romantic manner—conventions of a day that is dead. But the present-day reader, if he happen to have a good sense of rhythm, will be refreshed by Boker's blank verse after he has taken a turn at interpreting the variegated patterns of the imagists. No other American drama, of the numerous romantic tribe which peopled our stage from Godfrey's *Prince of Parthia* to Julia Ward Howe's *Leonora*, can show such admirably modulated verse. Indeed, with the possible exception of Bryant, American poets have not written notable blank verse, and Bryant had no dramatic sense. Boker is both a really good poet and a respectable dramatist.

His play has a certain humanness, particularly in the minor characters, and a raciness which give it a distinct American flavor. The sauciness of Francesca's maid Ritta and the lively fooling of the jester are quite in keeping with our traditional love for the comic spirit, and it is easy to understand how these two characters were stage favorites. I have already given a specimen of the fool's wit. Ritta's account of her 'case' with Joe (Giuseppe, for long) is better bourgeois comedy than Phillips's tavern scene; while the colloquy between Ritta and Lord Guido of Ravenna, her master, who remarks, with grim humor, that he boiled her predecessor in a pot for revealing some secret, ends with this choice bit of irony from Ritta:—

"Saints above !
I wonder if he ate her! Boil me—me!
I'll roast or stew with pleasure ; but to boil
Implies a want of tenderness,—or rather
A downright toughness—in the matter boiled,
That 's slanderous to a maiden. What, boil me—
Boil me! O! Mercy, how ridiculous!"

Boker, alone of the three dramatists, makes the lame son of Malatesta an essentially noble character. His nobility, indeed, gives dignity, and almost a moral elevation, to the play. Lanciotto, as Boker names him, does not want to marry Francesca, urging, rather, the greater fitness of his brother Paolo for the beautiful lady's hand. He dwells much upon his own deformity, an emphasis which the dramatist may have caught from the popular demand for a perpetuation of the humpbacked Richard. His battle-seared veteran of Rimini is a generous soul, well read in philosophy, soliloquizing in true Cato fashion, and at the last unable to survive the double tragedy in which fate has relentlessly involved him. The Francesca of the American play is the most likable of the three,—sympathetic, womanly, sensible. She weeps at her maid's recital of her own love troubles, but sheds few tears over her own,—a too obedient daughter and a well-meaning wife, no doubt, if only her lord had stayed at home! But what would one have? Hardly, I fancy, a husband who cries out: "I am homesick for the camp"; "A soldier's duty has no bridals in it"; and, as soon as the marriage ceremony is over, rushes off precipitately to war. Boker's Paolo is not admirable.

He seems tired after his mission to Ravenna to woo the fair Francesca for his brother—Boker's is the only play in which this proxy wooing is given—and when he is back at home he merely awaits developments, which are rapid enough after he and the lady begin to read together. Phillips's lover sought poison, d'Annunzio's killed Ghibellines and ruled in Florence. The Italian's is the strongest of the three, the one most likely to attract either a thirteenth- or a twentieth-century Francesca.

Thus have three modern poets dealt with the old story of Dante's eternally inseparable pair, and each has very naturally colored it according to the genius of his own race. Each has, moreover, interpreted it in harmony with his own temperament. A careful reading of the three plays leads one to conclude that the Italian's version is the most colorful and most historically faithful, the Englishman's the most delicately lyric, and the American's the most sanely human.

JOHN CALVIN METCALF.

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FRIENDS IN FICTION

Nay, these are friends, close friends; I may not think
 That each was formed to fit a master-thought,
 Made to a careful pattern, cut and brought
 To nature's semblance with a drop of ink;
 My gallant gentlemen, my lads of pride,
 My golden maidens and most gracious age,
 And children romping from a happy page
 As little neighbors might, to gain my side.

These are the friends I made when I was young,
 Given to many friendships, that to-day
 Show like illusions, faint and far away,
 But these alone have lived, endured and clung.
 Real as my love, alive in all my joys,—
 I cannot think of them as paper toys.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

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